

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for performing reconnaissance, intelligence-gathering and surveillance over a zone, the apparatus being of the type comprising means forming a projectile launcher, a projectile equipped with a camera and with an image transmitter circuit, and a receiver member for receiving the images transmitted in this way, said apparatus including the launcher-forming means are of a type that is individual, manually operated, and portable so that they can be carried by an individual person, in that the projectile is of small or medium caliber, and in that the receiver member comprises a viewing monitor and a receiver circuit, both of which are small in size so as to form a receiver member that is also individual, and portable, so that the apparatus can be used and transported by a person on his/her own.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, when the receiver member and the transmitter circuit communicate in real time using a suitable communications mode and generally directly between said transmitter circuit and said receiver member.

3. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the projectile has a caliber that is generally about 12.7 mm to about 60 mm.

4. The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the projectile has a caliber of substantially 40 mm.

5. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the projectile is provided with a means for at least one of stabilizing and slowing down its fall.

6. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the projectile is provided with a guide means.

7. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the projectile includes a compartment suitable for receiving an object of the type belonging to the group comprising a mobile telephone, a military charge, a medication, a provision, and combinations thereof.

8. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the camera is of a charge coupled device (CCD), complimentary metal-oxide silicon (CMOS), or digital.

9. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the launcher-forming means are provided with means for protecting the hands of the user.

10. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the means forming a projectile launcher are portable by a person during the launching of the projectile.

11. A method of performing reconnaissance, intelligence-gathering, and surveillance over a zone, which method is of the type comprising the following steps:

a) launching a projectile equipped with an on-board camera and with a transmitter circuit;

b) picking up images and transmitting the images picked up in this way; and

c) receiving the images and viewing them;

wherein said step a) is performed using launcher-forming means that are of a type that are individual, manually operated, and portable so that they can be carried by an individual person;

wherein said steps b) and c) are performed in real time; and

wherein said step c) is performed using a receiver member that is individual and portable;

wherein said steps a), b), and c) are able to be implemented by a person.

12. The method according to claim 11, further comprising:
d) providing a compartment suitable for receiving an object;
and
e) taking said object on board.

13. The method according to claim 11, further comprising f)
retrieving the projectile after landing so as to re-use at least
certain elements of the apparatus.

14. An apparatus comprising:

a projectile launcher;

a projectile operably launched by said projectile launcher,
the projectile including:

a camera operable to transmit an image through a first
circuit; and

a receiver operably receiving images transmitted by
said first circuit;

wherein the apparatus is substantially individually, manually
operated, and portable so that it can be moved substantially by a
single person;

wherein said receiver member is also substantially portable
by a single person so that the single person can use and transport
the apparatus.

15. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the receiver includes:
a second circuit operably receiving the signal transmitted by the first circuit; and
a monitor operably displaying the signal received by the second circuit;
wherein the person is able to view the signal displayed on the monitor.

16. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein said first and second circuits communicate in real time in a substantially direct manner.

17. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein a caliber of the projectile is about 12.7 mm to about 60 mm.

18. The apparatus of claim 14, further comprising a stabilizing mechanism acting to at least one of: stabilize and slow down, a fall of said projectile after said projectile is launched from said projectile launcher.

19. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a guide mechanism operably guiding said projectile through a selected path.

20. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein said projectile includes a compartment suitable for receiving an object essentially selected from a group comprising:
a mobile telephone, a military charge, a medication, a provision, and combinations thereof.